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Merits and demerits of new education policy 2020

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Abstract

India's first Educational Policy was passed and implemented in 1986. After thirty-four years, the National Education Policy (NEP) for India has been updated and approved on 29 July 2020. The policy signifies a huge milestone for India's education system, which will certainly make India an attractive destination for higher education world-wide. The policy is based on the pillars of "Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability, Accountability" and will transform India into a vibrant knowledge hub. The present study depicts an overview of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, salient features of the policy and distinguishes the strengths and weakness of the policy.

Keywords: Features, advantages, disadvantages, access, equity, quality, affordability, accountability

Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a policy document that outlines the vision, objectives and key provisions for the development of the Indian education system. The policy was approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2020 and is considered a landmark policy that has the potential to transform the education system. The National Education Policy aims to address various challenges faced by the education system and make it more inclusive, flexible and student-centric.

Overview of National Education Policy

The National Education Policy 2020 has envisaged a substantial transformation in the entire education system at all stages from Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to higher education. It envisages education as a continuum without any segmentation and focuses on making education more experiential, holistic, integrated, character-building, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible and above all more joyful. It clearly states that the purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought and action possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged productive and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive and plural society as envisaged.

Salient features of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

The new education policy of India called National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a comprehensive policy document that seeks to reform the education system in India by introducing several significant changes in the approach to education at all levels. The policy is based on principle of equity, quality, and access, and aims to transform the education system in India into a more inclusive, holistic, and multidisciplinary one. Here are some of the key features of the new National Education Policy of India:

Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education

The NEP 2020 aims to provide holistic and multidisciplinary education to students, which means they will have access to a diverse range of subjects, including art, music, and sports, along with their academic curriculum. This approach will enable students to develop their creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, which are essential for their overall development. The policy recognizes the importance of the development of all aspects of a student's personality, including cognitive, emotional, and social development, and proposes to integrate extracurricular activities into the curriculum to promote holistic development.

New School Structure

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 proposes a new 5+3+3+4 structure of school education in India which will replace the previous 10+2 system. The structure will have four stages: Foundational Stage (ages 3-8), Preparatory Stage (grades 3-5), Middle Stage (grades 6-8), and Secondary Stage (grades 9-12). The focus of each stage will be on developing foundational literacy and numeracy skills, higher-order thinking skills, subject-specific knowledge and skills, and vocational education.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

The National Education Policy 2020 recognizes the importance of early childhood care and education (ECCE) and proposes to provide universal access to high-quality ECCE for all children up to the age of 6 years by 2030. The policy also aims to develop a flexible, multi-level, and play-based curriculum for ECCE. The policy proposes to establish a National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education to ensure that the curriculum is developmentally appropriate and promotes the overall development of children.

Emphasis on Vocational Education

The NEP 2020 gives significant emphasis to vocational education, which aims to provide students with practical skills and knowledge that will help them in their future careers. The policy proposes to integrate vocational education into mainstream education and to provide multiple entry and exit points for students to acquire vocational skills. The policy recognizes the importance of vocational education in promoting employability and entrepreneurship and proposes to establish a National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) to provide recognition of vocational skills and qualifications.

Technology in Education

The National Education Policy 2020 recognizes the importance of technology in education and proposes to leverage it to improve the quality of education. The policy aims to provide equitable access to digital infrastructure and connectivity to all schools and to promote the use of technology in teaching and learning. The policy proposes to establish a National Education Technology Forum to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and best practices in the use of technology in education.

Flexible Curriculum and Assessment

The National Education Policy 2020 proposes a flexible and multidisciplinary curriculum, which will allow students to choose their subjects according to their interests and aptitude. The policy also aims to reduce the emphasis on rote learning and introduce a competency-based assessment system that will assess students' practical skills and knowledge. The new policy recognizes the need for a flexible and multidisciplinary curriculum that is in sync with the changing needs of the economy and society and proposes to formulate a new and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) in all regional languages to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and up-to-date.

Teacher Training and Professional Development

The NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of teacher training

and proposes to provide teachers with continuous professional development opportunities to upgrade their skills and knowledge. The policy also aims to attract the best talent into the teaching profession and to ensure that teachers are trained to deliver a holistic and multidisciplinary education to students.

Increased Public Investment in Education

The National Education Policy 2020 proposes to increase public investment in education to 6% of the GDP, which will help improve education quality and increase access to education for all. The policy also aims to encourage public-private partnerships in the education sector to leverage private sector resources and expertise.

In conclusion, we can say that the National Education Policy 2020 is a visionary policy statement that aims to overhaul the Indian educational system by enacting a number of substantial changes. The strategy intends to give students a comprehensive and multidisciplinary education, improve education quality and access, and create a trained workforce that can support the economic growth and development of the nation.

Advantages and Disadvantages of National Education Policy 2020

Advantages of National Education Policy 2020

At present, the education sector in India gets only a 3% share from GDP, but with the implementation of NEP 2020, spending will increase to almost 6% which is going to breathe a new life into the education sector. The current structure of 10+2 school education will be replaced with the 5+3+3+4 pattern, to reduce students' burden of board exams. There will also be a focus on vocational learning right from class 6 to 8, so that the students can learn practical skills such as gardening, carpentry, plumbing, artists, potters, etc., to introspect and understand their interests while developing a better understanding, respect for these skills. The children in classes from 9 to 12 will now have multidisciplinary course options available to them, which means that the different streams will be more porous with various subject combinations. Any student will be able to take up subjects of their interest, even if they are outside of their core discipline without strict adherence to the streams of Arts, Science and Commerce; a science student will be able to study history and an art student shall be free to pursue biology. The board exams system that primarily tested the memorization and rote learning ability of students will be replaced to develop critical thinking, rationalization, and creativity of students with the practical application of their knowledge. At present, the Government ensures that children from the age of 6 to 14 years may get compulsory education for which numerous programs were successfully carried out, including the one such as "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan". But it left out several children from the education system. Therefore, the updated NEP promises to universalize education to include the children from 3 years of age till 18 to provide them with free education at government-run establishments. The introduction of computers and coding classes as early as class 6 will be in the curriculum will be a positive step towards upgrading the learning process. Instead of countless independent entrance tests for getting admission in colleges, standard entrance tests will be put in place and administered by National Testing Agency (NTA) for uniformity and better clarity,

which in the long run, will support students in getting into the disciplines and educational institutes of their choice as expensive, sometimes exploitative entrance tests can be ended. The 3-year undergraduate program will be replaced with a 4-year program that will give the option to have a one-year degree after completing the 1st year, a diploma after completing the 2nd year, and a degree for the completion of 3 years. The fourth-year will be researched-based. The students will also have the option to change their discipline, their accrued credits will be transferable and available till their education pursuit is active. The implementation of NEP will put a ceiling on the extent fee is charged, so that the private institutions may not charge exuberantly for higher education. This step will make education more accessible and affordable, even to economically disadvantaged students. The new NEP will welcome the global educational institutions and foreign universities to set up their campuses in India. The Indians will have a better reach to quality education in their nation, making the dream affordable to more students as it may even reduce the brain drain. The new NEP delves into the provision of funds and the creation of special education zones, gender inclusion funds for the underprivileged students to give them access to learning and growth. Even the creation of the bal bhavans in every state will be a welcome step that will support the students residing in remote regions. The Indian culture and ethos will be part of the learning curriculum so that the students will be able to learn about India's ancient history and its glorious past, a step towards reviving our traditions and promote unity and brotherhood right at the early stage. By 2030, B.Ed. will be made a mandatory 4-year course to improve the quality of education for teachers and steps will be taken to make them capable of tackling various issues of the education system, including providing support and mentorship to the students, as well as being trained to teach the students with disabilities.

Possible Disadvantages of the NEP 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 has been praised for its numerous proposals, though many of its segments have caused some concern and it has received staunch criticism as well, which have been termed as major loopholes in the policy.

The NEP emphasizes the introduction of mother tongue in the primary classes which will be used to teach the principal subjects, while English will be taught at a much later stage. Unlike other nations such as Germany, Russia, Japan, China, France, etc., which have one common mother tongue, India is a diverse nation with 22 major languages and thousands of dialects. So, converting the basic subjects to these various regional languages (and mother tongues) will be a monumental task that will require a considerable amount of time, effort, and skilled professionals. One more factor that has caused some people to be vocal against the NEP is that the enforcement of mother tongue and regional languages is seen as the central government's move to enforce Hindi on the non-Hindi speaking states. The NEP suggests that the government schools will start teaching English after class 5, which is going to be a setback for the students who can only afford to go to government-run institutes. While the private schools will keep on with the practice of introducing English right from the beginning, which is going to be highly beneficial for their students. It

will widen the chasm between the different socio-economic groups and reduce several opportunities that could have been beneficial for the government school students if they were to teach English, the global language, at the early stages of their learning. Though it sounds practical and the need of the hour, but the focus on digitization of education and the promotion of e-learning under the NEP 2020 seems to overlook the fact that just about 30% of Indians can afford smart phones and fewer still have access to computers. Then the schools run by the government do not have a strong IT infrastructure, so the students in remote regions or underprivileged socio-economic backgrounds won't be able to acclimatize to the IT-based learning till such a facility is made available at the earliest. Since under the updated policy a student can exit from the graduate program and still get a certification or diploma, this can cause the students to quit without completing their education, leading to their non-seriousness and a high drop-out rate.

Conclusion

With the introduction of the New Education Policy 2020 many changes have been made. Overall the New Education Policy has more merits than demerits and will be greatly helpful in nut gating the rising unemployment problem in India by imparting much more advanced employment oriented and skill based professional education to youths according to an individuals need, choice, ability and competence.

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